

Wilson Hosts Successful Roundtable between Local Small Businesses and Banks

CANFIELD, OH – Today Congressman Charlie Wilson (OH-6) met with representatives from several local banks and small businesses to discuss the current economic climate, lending practices, and other challenges they are facing. The meeting took place at the Hampton Inn in Canfield, Ohio.

“I understand what it means to be a small business owner, and I appreciate the opportunity to hear the challenges they are facing,” Wilson said. “I want to use my position on the House Financial Services Committee to make sure that we are doing everything we can to get banks lending and small businesses growing again.”

The participants were able to speak freely with Congressman Wilson and provide firsthand accounts of the obstacles their business or industry faces. Small business owners expressed a dire need for access to capital; some want funds to expand their business; others need it to keep their business open during the downturn. Though many of the business owners would like to retain or even create jobs, they cited many factors that prevent them from doing so, including the sudden termination of existing credit lines, increases in regulatory paperwork, the inability to secure commercial loans and the inability to borrow against asset equity.

Representatives from a number of local banks also expressed concerns over the negative impact of the current environment. Though many expressed a desire to help local small businesses, they shared frustrations they have over several regulatory constraints, including mandatory loan requirements, increased capital reserve ratios and the inability to access broader secondary markets to sell commercial loans. Asset appraisals were also cited as another major factor holding back commercial loans.

“I’m encouraged that bankers and business owners are talking,” Wilson said. “An event like this helps open the lines of communication. If we can help foster better communication and improve the relationship between small businesses and banks, then we are taking an important step toward reviving our local economy.”

“Most importantly, this group generated some interesting ideas that I can take back to Washington with me,” Wilson said. “It is clear that both banks and businesses are looking for simpler, streamlined programs from entities like the Small Business Administration that could offer immediate help.”